BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

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Issue: 99-37 5 Pages
September 17, 1999

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Prices

- **British Columbia's inflation rate has begun to creep up after remaining below one percent during most of the last three years.** The consumer price index (CPI) was 1.3% higher this August than in the same month last year. However, BC's inflation rate remains well below the national average (+2.1%), and was the lowest in the country last month. Alberta's inflation rate (+2.6%) was the highest in Canada.

  Higher transportation costs are the primary reason for the upward movement in the inflation rate. The CPI for transportation rose 4.5% in August, marking the fifth straight month in which it has increased more than three percent. Soaring intercity transportation costs (+7.1%), combined with a 16.4% hike in the cost of gasoline, fuelled the jump last month.

  The cost of health and personal care (+3.1%) and household operations (+1.4%) rose more in BC than in the rest of the country. Offsetting this was a 0.5% decline in shelter costs (compared to a 1.3% increase nationally), and smaller-than-average increases in prices for food (+0.4%, compared to +1.1%) and clothing (+0.5%, compared to +1.5%).

  Shelter costs in the province have been falling since 1995. Excluding shelter costs, BC's inflation rate would have been 1.9% in August. The Canadian rate would have been 2.5%.

  Source: Statistics Canada & BC STATS

- **Inflation rates in Vancouver (+1.2%) and Victoria (+1.4%) were lower than in any other metropolitan areas.** Most major centres experienced inflation rates in excess of two percent, led by Edmonton (+2.7%), Calgary (+2.6%) and Toronto (+2.6%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

The Economy

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in British Columbia increased 1.6% (seasonally adjusted) between June and July.** Wood (+4.6%) shipments were up for the fifth straight month, while shipments by paper manufacturers expanded (+3.7%) for the first time since February. The improvement in the forest sector masked weakness in other industries. Despite an overall increase of 2.2%, shipments declined in six of the nine industries in the durables sector. Shipments by non-durable goods manufacturers rose 0.7%, but food shipments (-1.5%) were down for the sixth time this year. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Wholesale sales in the province increased 0.5% (seasonally adjusted) between June and July, rising to $3.3 billion.** BC was one of only three provinces where sales improved in July. Nationally, sales rose 0.4% in July, as strong performances in Ontario (+1.3%) and BC offset declines in other parts of the country.

  Source: Statistics Canada

University Finances

- **Less than a fifth (16.3%) of the revenues received by universities in the province for the 1997/98 school year came from fees paid by students.** BC students paid a smaller share of the cost of their education than students in any other province except Quebec, where fees represented just 13.6% of total revenues. Nationally, the share was 19.5%. Students bore the largest percentage of the total cost in Nova Scotia (28.2%) and Ontario (23.6%).

  The most important source of revenue for universities is government grants and contracts. These accounted for more than half (56.1%) of total revenue in BC. Other revenue sources in-

Report **Who's eligible for EI?**

Did you know...

We're number ten! BC has the lowest number of donut shops per capita in the country, even though the number of police officers (171 per 100,000 population) is only slightly below the national average. BC's police officers may prefer sipping lattes to dunking donuts.

clude investments and sales (21.1%) and bequests, donations, and other non-government grants and contracts (6.4%). Nationally, 55.3% of revenues came from grants, 16.1% from miscellaneous sources, and 9.0% from bequests and donations. *Source: SC, The Daily*

Physical Examinations

- **Among British Columbians aged 12 and over who'd had at least one physical exam prior to 1996/97, 15% said it was more than three years since their last checkup.** Nationally, 14% hadn't had a checkup for at least three years. Quebec (19%) was the province with the most holdouts, while Newfoundland (11%) had the fewest. Twenty percent of Canadians had never had a physical. Among the other 80%, one in five men, and one in ten women, hadn't had a physical for at least three years. Seventy-four percent of those who hadn't been examined recently didn't think a checkup was necessary. In stark contrast, only 5% reported that their doctor thought a checkup was not needed.

  Sixty-five percent of British Columbians who had been examined during the three-year period prior to 1996/97 said they went for a physical at least once a year. This was slightly below the national average of 67%. Ontarians (71%) were the most likely to have annual checkups, while residents of all three Prairie provinces (63%) were least likely to do so. *Source: SC, Catalogue 82-570-XIE*

Visits to the ER

- **British Columbians made 1,639,000 visits to emergency departments during 1995/96.** The rate of emergency room use (433.5 per 1,000 population) was virtually identical to the national average (433.1). Among the regions, the most frequent users of emergency services were residents of Yukon (527.8), Manitoba (502.1) and Alberta (479.2). People living in Saskatchewan (151.7) and Newfoundland (180.3) were least likely to seek help at an emergency room.

  One in four Canadians—27% of women and 22% of men—surveyed in 1996/97 said they had accessed emergency services during the previous 12 months. ER use was greatest among young adults (30% of those aged 25–34 had visited an emergency department in the last year), and least common among those aged 55–74 (20%). *Source: SC, Catalogue 82-570-XIE*

Organ Transplants

- **Between 1981 and 1996, there were 2,010 organ transplants performed in British Columbia.** Two-thirds (1,359) of the people who received new organs during this period had a functioning transplant at the end of 1996. Nationwide, there were 21,451 transplant operations between 1981 and 1996, and 12,083 (56%) of the transplants were still functioning in December 1996. *Source: SC, Catalogue 82-570-XIE*

- **There were 689 organ donors in Canada in 1996.** These included 266 living kidney donors, and 423 cadavers. Canada's organ donor rate, 14.1 per million population, was among the lowest in the developed countries.

  In BC, there were 48 cadaveric organ donors, giving the province a donor rate of 12.4 per million population. Manitoba (22.7) and Alberta (19.0) had the highest rates in the country. Saskatchewan, which had the country's lowest organ transplant rate (21.5 per million) also had the lowest donor rate (4.9 per million). In all provinces, less than half a percent (rates ranged from 0.1% in Saskatchewan to 0.3% in Manitoba and Alberta) of the people who died in 1996 were organ donors. *Source: SC, Catalogue 82-570-XIE & BC STATS*

- **3,072 Canadians were waiting for organ donations in December 1997.** Most (2,548, or 82%) were waiting for a new kidney. In addition, 248 people needed a new liver, 112 were waiting for a heart, 60 for a lung, and 124 for other organs. Almost half (48%) of these patients were listed for transplant in Ontario, followed by Quebec (21%) and BC (12%).

  Source: SC, Catalogue 82-570-XIE

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

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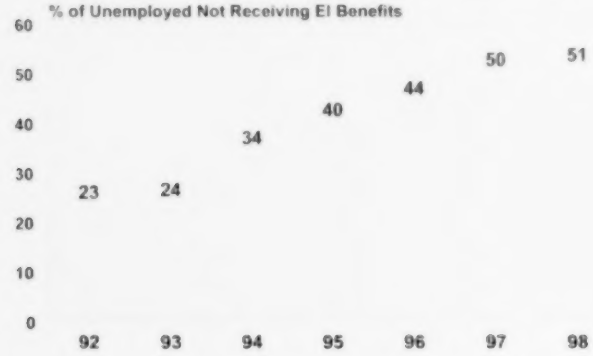
Infoline Report: The Employment Insurance program: regional differences

Contact: Anne Kittredge / (250) 387-0374

Originally published in May 1999 issue, *Earnings & Employment Trends*. Annual subscription: $60 + GST

In the November 1997 issue of Earnings and Employment Trends, we looked at the affects of the recent tightening of the Employment Insurance program on the access to benefits of the unemployed.

Over the Last 7 Years, the Proportion of Unemployed Who Did Not Collect EI Benefits Has More Than Doubled



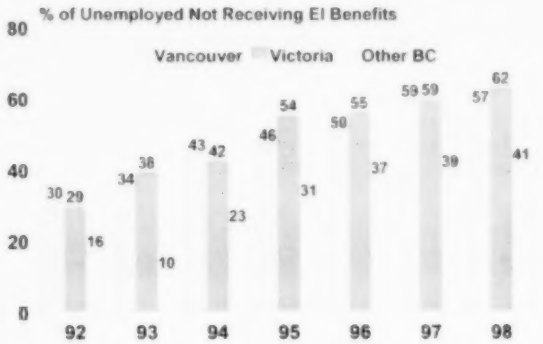
As illustrated in the chart above, the impact has been dramatic -- only one in four unemployed used to be excluded from EI benefits while now the norm is one in two. This trend of increasing EI exclusion is not unique to BC but can be observed right across the country.

Major differences in the levels of eligibility between the provinces existed prior to the changes in EI eligibility and they still predominate today. For provinces east of Ontario, the probability that the unemployed will be receiving EI remains close to double that in the rest of the country.

These provincial differences arise because (among other things) eligibility depends on the number of hours the unemployed have managed to work in the past year as well as the local unemployment rates. In other words, the industrial structure and current economic conditions in a region will dictate how difficult it is for an unemployed person to collect EI.

Regional differences in access to EI benefits by the unemployed apply to the regions within BC as well. Historically, the unemployed in the non-metropolitan areas have had an easier time in meeting the eligibility criteria.

Victoria's Unemployed are Less Likely to Qualify for Employment Insurance Benefits



In 1993, only one in 10 unemployed living outside the Vancouver/Victoria region was not collecting EI compared to one in three in Vancouver and Victoria. While the ineligibility rates in all regions have climbed significantly since then, the difference still remains.

An important reason for this difference is that unemployment rates are higher in the outlying regions, which means the number of weeks of work required to qualify for EI is less stringent and benefits continue for longer.

However, the unemployment rate differential does not explain why the eligibility rate has been lower in Victoria than in Vancouver over the last four years. Unemployment rates are similar in both cities and so should not have had a significant impact -- if anything, it would have favoured Victoria. The other important difference

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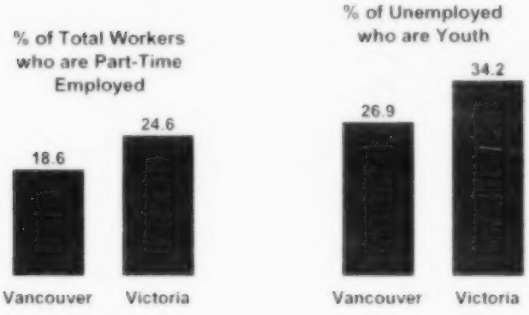
would be the industrial structure of the respective economies, which dictates the number of short-term casual/seasonal type jobs relative to full-time/full-year type jobs.

Victoria has a Higher Percentage of Part Time Workers and a Higher Percentage of their Unemployed are Youth - 1998



The number of hours worked during a year depends on the number of hours employees chalk up each week (part-time/full time nature of the jobs) plus the number of weeks worked in the year. The chart above shows that Vancouverites, on average, will work more hours per week because relatively more of them work full-time.

Secondly, youth comprise a larger proportion of the unemployed in Victoria than in Vancouver. As a general rule, youth work fewer weeks per year than adults either because of school commitments or a tendency to be employed in lesser stable jobs. Thus, one can assume that Victoria's unemployed have fewer hours of work per year because the young comprise such a high proportion of the unemployed.

The conclusion is that any tightening of the hours worked around EI eligibility will be more detrimental to the unemployed in Victoria than in Vancouver.

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,028.3	0.7
Canada	30,482.9	0.9
GDP and INCOME		% change on
(BC - at market prices)	1997	one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	109,347	3.3
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	98,201	2.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,775	0.1
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,340	-2.3
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jul	3,075	10.6
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jun	2,463	13.7
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jun	2,769	1.0
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	Aug '99	one year ago
BC	111.8	1.3
Canada	111.1	2.1
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Aug '99	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,071	1.4
Employed - BC	1,893	1.5
Unemployed - BC	178	0.6
		Aug '98
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.6	8.7
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.8	8.3
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Sep 15/99	Sep 16/98
Prime Business Rate	6.25	7.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.05	6.95
- 5 year	7.80	7.30
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Sep 15/99	Sep 16/98
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4754	1.5034
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6774	0.6605
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jun '99	one year ago
BC	628.54	0.6
Canada	612.62	0.8

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

New data source . . .

The release of *Earnings & Employment Trends* next week will mark the introduction of the use of **Labour Force Survey** (LFS) data for the entire release. The cover article describes our rationale for no longer publishing **Survey of Employment, Payroll and Hours** (SEPH) based data. As a result of the changeover, and the timing of the different data streams, no issue identified as July 1999 will be released. Next week's issue will be titled, *Earnings & Employment Trends – August 1999.*

Released this week by BC STATS

- Labour Force Statistics, July 1999
- Consumer Price Index, August 1999

Next week

- Earnings & Employment Trends, August 1999

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